mercifully put an end to them, showed signs of flagging, and its reception of growing tepid.

Even so, his Conservative colleagues were ready enough to leave his continental tours largely unrestricted provided he did not accompany them to Ottawa, for the Imperial Conference to be held there. Dominion Preferences and other bread-and-butter issues which would come up for discussion, seemed then of vastly greater moment than Danubian Federations or Chancellor B dining's difficulties; in Geneva or Lausanne the Prime Minister could do no particular harm, but at Ottawa Mr. Thomas was better.

Though Mr. Neville Chamberlain remarked of the Ottawa Conference that 'the Empire was there born afresh,[5] its practical results were meagre, amounting only to a slight increase in trade within the Empire, which in the case of the Mother Country was offset by a rather larger decrease in foreign trade; and though the Prime Minister continued to express the hope that it would yet prove possible [e]to remove by negotiation the dangers which will have to be met in any event," even he was constrained to admit that at Geneva he had felt 'day after day as though I was looking upon a stage with something moving immediately behind the footlights, but as if there was something else there of a different character—an ominous background full of shadows and uncertainties. Europe is not settled. Europe is very unsettled. Europe is in a very nervous condition/[6] With this feeling in his heart, it is not surprising that he eagerly approved a proposal to summon one more conference, bigger,

more comprehensive in its range, with a more distinguished and more numerous attendance, than even the Disarmament Conference; a World Economic Conference, over which he would preside, and which surely could not fail—'The direct representatives of this Government, that Government, and the other Government, brought face to face . *. will much more quickly

* Quoted from *Hansard* in *A Strong Hand at the Helm*, a useful collection of utterances by members of the National Government during the first year **of its** existence.